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Sixtieth session

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTEEN HUNDRED AND THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 18 January 1994

President: Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom)

- Adoption of an additional agenda item 1 (T/1970/Add.3)
- Report of the Secretary-General on credentials (T/1973/Rev.1)
- Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to observe the plebiscite in Palau, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, November 1993 (T/1978, T/L.1290)
- Adoption of the report of the Trusteeship Council to the Security Council (Security Council resolution 70 (1949))
- Closure of the sixtieth session

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94-85045 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

ADOPTION OF AN ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM (T/1970/Add.3)

The PRESIDENT: I wish to draw members' attention to the addition of agenda item 15, contained in document T/1970/Add.3, entitled "Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Observe the Plebiscite in Palau, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, November 1993". The report is before the Council in document T/1978.

If there are no comments and if there is no objection, I shall consider that item 15 is added to the agenda.

It was so decided.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON CREDENTIALS (T/1973/Rev.1)

The PRESIDENT: If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Council decides to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on credentials for the sixtieth session.

It was so decided.

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION TO OBSERVE THE PLEBISCITE IN PALAU, TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS, NOVEMBER 1993 (T/1978, T/L.1290)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to draw the Council's attention to the correct title of the report of the Visiting Mission contained in document T/1978. It should read - and an amended page has, I believe, been circulated - "Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Observe the Plebiscite in Palau, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, November 1993". This correction will be reflected in the official records of the Trusteeship Council.

In connection with this agenda item, the delegations of the Marshall Islands and Samoa have asked to sit at the Council table during this meeting. In accordance with rule 12 of our rules of

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procedure and with the Council's consent, I propose to invite those representatives to take places at the Council table and to participate, without the right to vote, in the Council's deliberations on the item.

It was so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Heine (Marshall Islands) and Mr. Slade (Samoa) took places at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT: Before we proceed - and I am sure I am speaking on behalf of all Council members - I wish to thank those representatives very much for their presence today and, above all, for the very great contribution they and their delegations have made in connection with the recent and important Visiting Mission to Palau.

I should now like to ask the representative of France to introduce the Visiting Mission's report, which is before the Council in document T/1978, and the related draft resolution contained in document T/L.1290.

Mr. LADSOUS (France) (interpretation from French): The Trusteeship Council has before it the report of the Visiting Mission of the United Nations to Palau, dated 15 December 1993 and contained in document T/1978. My delegation, whose Mr. Alain Pallu de Beaupuy chaired the Mission, was charged with submitting the present report to the Trusteeship Council at this session.

Allow me first to express, on behalf of the Chairman of the Mission, appreciation to the Secretariat and the administering Power for the work they did to ensure that the Mission could carry out its task in the best possible conditions. I should also like to pay a tribute to the Palauan authorities, particularly

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President Kuniwo Nakamura, for the welcome they extended to the members of the Mission. Finally, on behalf of my country, I should like to thank the members of Mission for their skilful and valuable assistance to the Chairman.

The Visiting Mission to Palau was definitively established by the Trusteeship Council on 1 November 1993, following the voting on resolution 2197 (LX). The Mission visited Palua from 5 November to 12 November that year. On its arrival there, the Chairman broadcast a statement to the people outlining the Mission's mandate and the role it intended to play. With the assistance of the local authorities, it held 10 public meetings in various locations throughout Palau and also made itself available to individuals or groups that wished to meet with it.

The Mission noted, in general, that the great majority of Palauans, because of what they had learned from the previous referendum, were fully aware of what was at stake in the upcoming plebiscite, which was set for 9 November 1993. The Mission was able to observe the campaign, which, overall, seemed quite low-key.

On the day of the voting the Mission broke up into several teams in order to observe the voting process in 34 of the 36 polling stations. It found satisfactory the practical arrangements for organizing the poll, counting the votes and announcing the results: 68.26 per cent of the people voted "Yes".

On the basis of what the Mission was able to observe, it drew up the report now before the Council.

The PRESIDENT: Although I myself was unfortunately unable to participate in the Visiting Mission, I know that it was considered extremely successful by the people of Palau and provided

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an invaluable guarantee of the electoral process. I therefore wish to add my own thanks to the members of the Mission for their efforts.

The representative of the Administering Authority wishes to speak before we adopt the draft resolution, and I now call on him.

Mr. WALLACE (United States of America): I would like to express the appreciation of the Government of the United States to the members of the Trusteeship Council's Visiting Mission to Palau, who observed the eighth and final referendum on the Compact of Free Association between Palau and the United States. The results of that referendum, which the observers endorsed in the Mission's report (T/1978) we are considering here today, were a very important step for the people of Palau on their way towards political self-determination.

The people of Palau have spoken with a clear voice about the future and have determined through democratic means that they wish Palau to enter into free association with the United States. The Government of the United States and the Government of Palau intend to implement the Compact of Free Association as quickly as practical, and planning for the smooth transition to Palau's new status is well under way.

The filing of two complaints in the Palauan courts challenging the ratification of the Compact may cause some delay, but the Palauan Administration is confident that these complaints will not become an obstacle to implementation. At any rate, we expect Palau's transition to be either completed or nearly so by the end of this year.

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that the Trusteeship Council is prepared to adopt the draft resolution contained in document T/L.1290 without a vote?

The draft resolution was adopted.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Samoa.

Mr. SLADE (Samoa): I represent a country that is no stranger to the Trusteeship Council. Indeed, one might say that, Samoa being a former Territory entrusted by the United Nations Charter to this body, the fundamentals of what it is today were set in this very Chamber. Therefore, my delegation could not have passed up the occasion of the presentation of the Visiting Mission's report (T/1978) on the plebiscite in Palau without seeking a few moments to make this intervention.

My first words are of gratitude to you, Mr. President, to this Council and to my colleagues among the South Pacific Missions represented in New York for the opportunity for my delegation, and for me personally, to serve on the Visiting Mission along with my friend the Ambassador of the Marshall Islands. I understand that he wishes to be associated with the remarks that I make.

We should record here as well our profound gratitude to the President, the Government and the people of Palau for the many insights we shared during the Mission, and even more for the many courtesies and hospitality extended to us all.

Our purpose, of course, was to observe and to report on the plebiscite on the Compact of Free Association. This we have done in favourable terms and with unanimity. We were all satisfied with the arrangements for the poll and were able to conclude that the plebiscite was conducted in a free and fair manner. My own delegation was particularly struck by the high sensitivity and awareness among the people as to what the plebiscite was about.

Secondly, and notwithstanding the fact that this was the eighth plebiscite and there was a certain amount of familiarity with the subject, there seemed to me to be a determined seriousness for the people to express themselves - definitively, perhaps - on

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the Compact of Free Association. Both these aspects are mentioned in the report.

The Mission also provided an on-the-spot opportunity for wider assessment and consultation. Palau is already an active participant in many Pacific institutions: the South Pacific Commission and the Forum Fisheries Agency among them. For my delegation, there was a basis for ready identification with many of the aspirations of the country and its people. As the chance often arose in the consultations, we shared with a wide variety of people our own experiences as a Pacific Island State and as a nation. It was an occasion to give assurance, whatever the final verdict of the people of Palau, of Samoa's warm and committed support, and that of the Marshall Islands too, I might add.

One would need to say, however, that in the nature of these reports other matters of importance are not always touched on but only hinted at. This report, for example, does not tell of the beauty of the land, of its unique and clean environment, and of the character of a people that today represents the amalgam of many important civilizations. Speaking for myself, I began to understand the enormity of the decision facing the people, not so much from my readings but more so by my presence in Palau. Thus, for my delegation, the time so far taken puts no qualification whatever on the resolve of the people or the quality of the final judgement we might expect of them.

We endorse in every respect what the representative of France has said in introducing the Mission's report and share fully the hopes and the good wishes he has expressed. Not only is the report

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evidence of our undertaking: it is testimony of the high measure of professional cooperation and personal goodwill that existed at all times among the members of the group. But it would have been futile to try and produce this report in the time and with the numbers we had without the skills and the dedication of Mr. Mustafa and Ms. Wilkinson, both of whom, well beyond the call of duty, were always there to provide guidance and support.

The PRESIDENT: I know exactly what the representative of Samoa means. This is a report about a Visiting Mission by its nature: it cannot describe the totality of what one finds in visiting those beautiful islands. I myself went on one of our regular missions a year earlier, and I can fully endorse everything the representative of Samoa said.

The Council has thus concluded consideration of the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Observe the Plebiscite in Palau, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, November 1993.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL (SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 70 (1949))

The PRESIDENT: Members of the Council will recall that at our 1701st meeting, held on 17 May last year, the Council decided, in conformity with previous procedure, to meet in resumed session to consider its draft report to the Security Council.

The draft report of our sixtieth session has been distributed to all members. Part I, entitled "Organization and activities of the Trusteeship Council", follows the previous procedure and is based on the official verbatim records of the current session. Section E of this part also includes for consideration the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Observe the Plebiscite in Palau (T/1978). The Secretariat, in consultation with Council

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members, will complete section E of part I on the basis of our deliberations at today's meeting. Part II of the report contains the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Council at its 1701st meeting on 17 May 1993. The Council has thus already adopted part II of the report.

Before the Council takes action on the draft report, I should like to inform members that their suggested modifications have been incorporated into the English version of the draft. The Secretariat has informed me that these modifications, which may not yet be reflected in the texts of the other official languages, will be incorporated into the final versions to be submitted to the Security Council.

As there appear to be no comments, the Council will now proceed to take action on the draft report of the Trusteeship Council to the Security Council.

May I take it that the Council is prepared to adopt the draft report, as a whole, without a vote?

The draft report was adopted.

CLOSURE OF THE SIXTIETH SESSION

The PRESIDENT: With the adoption of our report to the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council has now concluded its work for the sixtieth session.

I do not wish to prolong the meeting unduly, but since I myself shall be leaving New York in two days' time, perhaps I could just say how proud I am to have been associated with the work of this Council over a number of years now. I first came here in the 1970s, when the Trusteeship Council had rather more to do than it has today. It was kind enough to elect me its President for the residue of the year 1989-1990, and this is the third time that I have had the honour to be in the Chair.

To paraphrase a distinguished former Prime Minister of ours, we may not be at the end, nor at the beginning of the end, but we definitely have seen the end of the beginning. In fact, I suspect we have advanced slightly farther than that. We now know what remains to be done - and much of that, of course, is outside our control in a very real sense. But we have the benefit of the Visiting Mission's report, we have the outcome of a referendum and we will now need to see, as our United States colleague has indicated, what emerges over the remaining months of this year.

I should like to thank everyone very warmly indeed for their cooperation over the past few years. I pay a particular tribute, as our colleague from Samoa has just done, to the members of the Secretariat, who, I can attest from my own firsthand experience, have always been extremely diligent and absolutely essential in the carrying out of these visiting missions, whether they be the regular ones or those to observe a referendum. The experience that

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has been accumulated over the years has been simply invaluable. And not only that: the unfailing courtesy and good will of the Secretariat have made an impression upon all of us.

I extend my thanks naturally also to all those present at this meeting, including our interpreters and the verbatim reporters.

I would also like to salute someone who is discreetly parked in the back row: a former President of the Trusteeship Council and indeed a predecessor of mine, Sir James Murray, whom one or two of you may know, and whom I remember very well in this particular seat, grappling with some rather larger issues in the middle of the 1970s. I am delighted, Sir James, that you could be with us today.

I believe that the representative of the Russian Federation would like to say a few words. I now call on him.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): The Russian delegation would like to express its satisfaction at the results of the sixtieth session of the Trusteeship Council, which is now concluding, and would like to thank the Secretariat of the Trusteeship Council, the interpreters and all the others who have contributed to the success of this session.

My delegation, whose representative was a member of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Observe the Plebiscite in Palau, would like to express its gratitude for the work done by the Mission. We would also note the wise and skilful guidance of the Mission's work by its Chairman, the representative of France, Ambassador Alain Pallu de Beaupuy.

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

My delegation would like to express particular gratitude to the Government of Palau, which facilitated the successful fulfilment of the Mission's task. We express the hope that the results of the plebiscite in Palau, held on 9 November 1993, will lay the bases for ending the Trusteeship System in the last of the Trust Territories of the United Nations.

However, today's meeting has been a somewhat sombre occasion because you, Sir, who for several years, as either the captain or his deputy, have wisely steered our ship through the sometimes stormy Micronesian waters, are leaving this ship. We greatly appreciate the fruitful cooperation between our two delegations in the Trusteeship Council. We are sure that your activities in the post of President of the Trusteeship Council will be warmly remembered both by members of the Council and by the inhabitants of Palau with whom the United Nations Visiting Mission met. We wish you further success in your forthcoming work in your new post.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for those words. Perhaps I should add that I understand that his colleague Mr. Dzakhaev, who was on the Mission, is leaving shortly, too, for some important new duties back at headquarters in Moscow. I am sure I speak on behalf of all of us in wishing him the very best of success and thanking him for his cooperation with us and for all he did on the Visiting Mission.

I would like to ask our French colleagues to transmit the warm thanks of the Trusteeship Council and of myself personally to Ambassador de Beaupuy for the excellent work he did. I remember meeting him before he left for the visit. I did not have the

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privilege or pleasure of seeing him when he came back, but everyone has told me what an excellent job he did. Hence, I would like our colleagues from France to pass on our warmest thanks to the Ambassador.

I declare closed the sixtieth session of the Trusteeship Council.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.